



LESSON 2:

LOCATING AND PLACING SEVEN JAPANESE STUDENTS

Introduction:

This lesson assumes that, although students may be familiar with important geographic ideas, they have not been introduced to the geography of Japan or to the Deai kit's seven Japanese students and their cities or towns. While the lesson focuses on getting to know the Japanese students, it also emphasizes geographic terms and themes. The primary goal of the lesson is to improve the geographic skills of students as they locate the cities where the seven Japanese teenagers live and identify the cities' characteristics as places.

If your students are well-grounded in locational skills and understand that maps are designed by people and that design choices—such as what landform or body of water appears in the center of the map—affect the reader's perceptions, you may wish to start the lesson with Step 6 under Day 1 of the **Procedure**.

Organizing Questions:

What can we learn about place and the relationship between society and the environment?

Objectives: At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be better able to:

1. Define the following geographic terms: *cartographer, perspective, subjectivity, absolute and relative location, equator, lines of latitude and longitude, archipelago, prefecture, contiguous, place.*
2. Recognize perspective and subjectivity in map design.
3. Ask geographic questions about location and place.
4. Describe the locations and places in which the seven Japanese students live.

Time Required: 2½ class periods plus homework

Materials:

1. Blank sheets of paper for all students
2. Copies of the "My Town" and world maps (pages 10 and 13 of this unit, respectively) for all students
3. Classroom maps of the world showing Europe, North America, or the Atlantic Ocean in the center

4. Pronunciation guide for Japanese high school students' names (page 9 of this unit) copied onto the board
5. Photographs representing the places where the seven Deai students live. If at least seven computers are available to students, the Deai CD-ROMs can be used. CD-ROM1 lists "Nature and the Environment" images associated with each Japanese student; CD-ROM2 has "My Favorite Places" for each. If sufficient computers are not available, the following photo sheets can be used:
 - Mizushima Yu: P03, P04, P11, D09
 - Oishi Kanta: P12, P13, D05, D08, D13
 - Sakai Michi: P03, P05, P08, P11, D07
 - Tamaki Shun'ichi: P03, P07, P13, P14, D13
 - Yoshida Kojiro: P03, P04, P09, D06
 - Yamamoto Takayuki: P10, P13, P15, P16, D08
 - Yoo Yoo Jin: P03, P07, P12, D06, D13

Procedure:

Day 1

1. Ask students to draw on a blank sheet of paper a simple map of the world that shows only the seven continents. Assure your students that the map does not have to be accurate: you want to see where they place the continents in relation to one another; their work will not be graded.
2. Distribute copies of the world map from page 13 of this unit. Ask students whether the continents on their world maps are in the same relative location as the continents on the laminated map. Are they surprised to see Asia in the center of this map? What did they draw in the center of their maps? (*Most likely North America, Europe, or the Atlantic Ocean*) Why? Remind students that people called cartographers create maps and that maps serve the purpose(s) for which the cartographers create them. Maps may reflect the perspective (point of view) of their makers or that of the audience for which they are intended.
3. Discuss the implications of a world map with Japan at its center. How do students react to it? How might Japanese people feel about such a map? What affects the decisions of cartographers as they choose what to put in the center of their maps? (*Answers may include where the mapmakers are from, how well they know the area they're depicting, what they want to emphasize, the audiences for which the maps are created, etc.*)
4. Ask: What might be the purpose of the world map on this handout? (*To introduce Japan's location in the world*) Remind students that "Where?" questions are fundamental to geography. When we answer "where" questions, we are describing locations. Review the concept of absolute location—the position of a point on Earth's surface expressed by means of a grid or another system of identifying specific points, such as street addresses. Ask: What would need to be added to the handout map to determine the absolute location of Japan in the world? (*The grid created by lines of latitude and longitude*) Point out that the equator, or 0 degrees latitude, is shown on the laminated map, as is the International Date Line, which roughly follows 180 degrees longitude. However,

without additional lines of longitude and latitude, absolute location cannot be determined.

5. Review the concept of relative location—a description of where something is in comparison to something else. Using the laminated map, what can students determine about the relative location of Japan compared to the equator? (*Japan is north of the equator, or north of 0 degrees latitude.*) Ask: Describe Japan's location relative to the International Date Line. (*Japan is west of the International Date Line.*) Ask students to identify another way in which they could describe the relative location of Japan. (*Many answers are possible; examples are: Japan is east of the Asian mainland, Japan is north of Australia.*)
6. Point out that Japan is an island country, consisting of four main islands in a chain. Ask: What geographic term means a chain of islands? (*Archipelago*)
7. Distribute copies of the “My Town” map from page 10 of this unit. Focus students' attention on the prefectures and towns associated with the Japanese students. Tell students that this map is designed to introduce the locations of the seven Japanese students, identified on the maps by their initials. Ask students to identify the symbols used to represent cities (*black dots inside circles*) and prefectures (*shading*) on the map. The students may notice that there are more than seven locations identified on the map; ask them why that might be. (*The map shows not only where the Japanese students live now, but also where they have lived in the past or where they live when they are away from their family home.*)
8. Label the “top” of the map North. Call attention to the fact that the Japanese archipelago “sits” on the earth in a position that is often wrongly described. The archipelago does not fall in a straight north-south line as many people mistakenly believe, but in a line that runs northeast to southwest. Reinforce this understanding by asking which of the Deai students lives farthest northeast (*SM*) and farthest southwest (*TS*). Show students one or more world maps on which Japan appears at the edge of the map, rather than in the center. In these maps, Japan may appear to lie along a north-south line because of the projection used by the cartographer to produce the map. Explain to students that all maps of the world provide a somewhat distorted view of the world's landforms or bodies of water because of the difficulty of representing a spherical object on a flat surface.
9. Reinforce the concept of relative location by having students create questions about the Japanese students' locations in relation to one another. Students can then pair up and ask each other the questions they have created. Examples: What is *SM*'s location relative to that of *TS*? (*Northeast*). Name the students whose prefectures are contiguous to (touch) one another. (*YK and YT; OK, MY, and SM*)
10. Help students see the four main islands in relation to one another; it is not necessary at this time to name them. Because one of the Japanese students is from Okinawa, your students may have the mistaken impression that Okinawa is one of the four main islands. Point out that there is a fourth island, south of Japan's largest island, on which none of the Japanese students lives.

11. For homework, ask students to choose from the following assignments:
- Using the Internet, find and print out at least two projections of a world map that do not look like the one used in this lesson; bring copies to class.
 - Find a newspaper or magazine article that features Japan; highlight information about locations in Japan. Bring the article to class.
 - Ask three adults these questions and record their answers:
 - a. How many main islands make up the country, Japan?
 - b. In what direction does the archipelago Japan run (north-south, east-west, northeast-southwest, northwest-southeast)?
 - c. If you were drawing a map of the world, where would you put Japan—on the right side, the left side, in the center? Why would you put it there?

Day 2

1. Divide the class into three groups, according to the homework assignment chosen by the students. Give the groups ten minutes to select reporters and discuss their findings. The following questions should guide student discussion:
 - Map group: How are the maps found by group members similar to and different from the maps examined in class? How is Japan represented on the maps found? What are the purposes of these maps? Does the purpose affect how Japan is represented?
 - Article group: What locations are mentioned in the articles found by group members? Is the geographic information important to understanding the article? Explain your answer.
 - Survey group: Combine your answers. Which questions were adults most likely to answer correctly? Incorrectly? What does this survey tell you about attitudes toward and knowledge of Japan among U.S. adults?
2. Give each reporter two minutes to report for the group. As each student reports, reinforce the following points:
 - Maps are subjective; every map reflects the views of the cartographer who drew it and the purposes for which it was made.
 - Magazine and newspaper articles on Japan usually identify the cities and prefectures from which the news originates, and students should pay attention to these locations.
 - Japan is an archipelago, a chain of four main islands that lie in a northeast-southwest direction.
3. Review the geographic concept of place. A place is a location that has characteristics that give it meaning and differentiate it from other places. Remind students that all people's lives are set in particular places: we all come from a place, live in a place, take pride in or possibly reject a place that surrounds us. To some extent, we all get some sense of "who we are" from the place in which we live. Japanese people are no different in this regard. Therefore, to get to know the Japanese students, it makes sense to look at the places where they live, go to school, play, and work.

4. Discuss the distinction between a place's physical characteristics, those that are part of the natural environment, and human characteristics, those that result from the actions of people. Ask for examples of physical (*mountains, rivers, beaches, forests, animals, amounts of precipitation*) and human characteristics (*buildings, roads, street signs*) and record them on the board.
5. Assign four or five students to each of the Japanese students. If this is their introduction to the names of the Japanese teenagers, remind students that in Japan, as in some other countries, the surname appears first, the given name second. (The guide to pronouncing the Japanese students' names on page 9 might be copied onto the board for reference.) Tell the groups that they will become the "experts" on the places where their students live and go to school.
6. Explain that the groups will be studying photographs of their assigned Japanese students. Their task is to observe the images and describe them in geographic terms—their physical and human characteristics—by answering questions that the class creates together. Work with students to develop geographic questions related to the physical characteristics of place. Record their questions on the board under the heading "Physical Characteristics of Place." Examples:
 - What landforms appear in the images?
 - What can we learn about weather and climate in Japan?
 - Do the Japanese students live on or near bodies of water?
 - Is there evidence of any wildlife? Natural hazards?
 - What vegetation appears in the images?

Work with students to develop geographic questions related to the human characteristics of place. On the board record their questions under the heading "Human Characteristics of Place." Examples:

- What types of buildings appear in the images?
 - What jobs do people have?
 - How do they spend their leisure time?
 - Is there evidence of religion, or of belief systems, in the surroundings?
 - How do people get from one place to another?
 - How diverse are the people of Japan?
 - Do the people make use of technology?
7. Distribute the photo sheets listed in the **Materials** section, or explain how students can access images on CD-ROMs 1 and 2. As students peruse the images, observing the variety of places in Japan, ask them to jot down answers to the questions that the class created.
 8. Write the following incomplete sentences on the board for students to copy:
 - To me, the most surprising things about Japan's location and about its physical and human characteristics were...
 - I am surprised by what I observed because...
 9. For homework, ask students to write a paragraph to complete the idea in each sentence. They should use the organizing questions from Step 4 above to help

them frame their responses. If any students insist they are not surprised by what they observed in this lesson, invite them to write a two-paragraph essay explaining how what they learned in the lesson confirmed what they already knew about Japan's location and its physical and human characteristics.

Day 3

1. Form new groups comprised of representatives of each of the seven groups from the previous day. Group members should discuss what they observed in the images surrounding the Japanese student they were assigned. This "jigsaw" technique should result in all members of the class being introduced to the places important to all of the Japanese students. Students should become aware of the variety of physical and human characteristics of places in Japan. Students should be able to answer the following questions:
 - Where does Student X live and go to school?
 - How would you describe the physical and human characteristics of the places where Student X lives and goes to school?
 - How are the places where the seven students live and go to school similar and different?
2. Review with the class important information from this lesson: Japan is an archipelago located north of the equator and west of the International Date Line; the Japanese archipelago runs in a northeast-southwest direction; the home towns of six of the Japanese students are located on three of Japan's four main islands while one student's home town is on a smaller island that is also part of the Japanese archipelago; each student's home town has unique human and physical characteristics that define that place.

Extension and Enrichment:

1. Engage students in exploring the concept of absolute location, particularly the use of latitude and longitude. For example, students could use an atlas to identify the latitude and longitude of the home towns of the seven Japanese students.
2. Teachers and students may also want to refer to *Asia for Educators* (<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu>), an Internet site developed at Columbia University. The segment on Japan's geography provides an overview of Japan's physical environment with an introductory reading and nine maps and accompanying exercises for students.
3. A third aspect of a place's character is the meaning people give to the place through their emotional and intellectual responses to it. For example, a monument to people killed in war evokes a different response and therefore has a different "meaning" than a school gymnasium. People from different cultures may respond differently to places. Suggest that students examine the narratives on the photo sheets for information about the meaning the Japanese students give to the places in their lives. What places in students' own lives have similar meanings?